

CALIFORNIA ENERGY CRISIS

(Mr. HERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, we have an energy crisis. Eight years of Clinton-Gore no-growth energy and Federal environmental policies have left us facing frequent shortages.

In my home State of California, the population has grown by 4 million people over 10 years. The economy has doubled in half that time. Sadly, the radical environmentalists have prevented the construction of new power plants.

The equation is simple: more people and no power plants equal blackouts. Rather than place blame, President Bush has proposed a responsible solution that seeks to address our dire situation, increase supply while offering incentives to reduce demand.

While California is already the most energy efficient State in the country, the President's comprehensive policy will promote new power plant construction. It is not necessarily political, but it recognizes that there are no quick fixes to the years of policies that forced us deep into the dark.

SUPPORT BIPARTISAN PATIENT PROTECTION ACT

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, Americans need a Patients' Bill of Rights. Every single day we hear stories of patients whose health has been seriously jeopardized because their health plan has denied coverage. Each day 35,000 patients experience a delay in needed care and 7,000 patients per day are denied referral to a medical specialist.

Doctors are unable to make the best medical decisions for their patients because their hands are tied by the insurance companies. What we need to do is to return those medical decisions back to doctors and patients and out of the hands of insurance companies. We need a Patients' Bill of Rights that grants access to specialists, allows patients to choose their own doctors, lifts physician gags that prohibit doctors from talking about medical options, allows for access to emergency rooms, and, yes, holds HMOs accountable for negligent actions.

These patient protections are long overdue. The Republican leadership has watered down meaningful bipartisan legislation to protect another special interest, the managed care organizations. They want to give HMOs special protection from lawsuits, while weakening patients' ability to hold health plans accountable.

Vote for Dingell-Norwood. Support the bipartisan Patient Protection Act.

In the long run, it will help the American people.

BECOMING ENERGY SELF-RELIANT

(Mr. REHBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, let us put all the political posturing and gamesmanship aside and be honest: the major causes of high energy prices this summer will be the lack of domestic energy production and the absence of new investments in the electricity generation facilities needed to meet the growth experienced over the last decade.

That is why becoming more energy self-reliant is so important. If we want an uninterrupted supply of energy, then we need more American oil, American gas, and clean coal. In Montana alone, we have several hundred years' worth of natural gas and coal deposits. Current estimates place coal resources for eastern Montana at about 50 billion tons, two-thirds of which is low-sulfur, clean-burning coal.

In developing these resources, it is important that we keep in mind that America has some of the highest environmental standards and most advanced technology in the world. Our strict laws do a good job of ensuring our environment is protected.

The bottom line is this: relying upon our own energy resources is cleaner and safer than importing energy from countries with inferior technology and scant environmental oversight.

SUPPORT A REAL PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(Ms. CARSON of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, as many of you know, when I was elected to the United States Congress, prior to being sworn in, I had to walk into a hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana, and announce that I believed I was on the verge of a heart attack. Because I was an elected Member of Congress, I did not have to get permission from anybody to get the best medical services that Indianapolis, Indiana, had to offer. That is why I stand before you today on behalf of all of the people who seek the services from HMOs who do not happen to be a Member of the United States Congress.

The President of the United States claims credit for the HMO reform bill that passed in Texas when he was Governor. You would think that a person who claims credit for an issue would work hard to put it into practice at his new job.

It is not right for the HMOs to take money from people they are supposed

to serve and then deny them the service when those same people need help.

We need to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights bill that would hold health plans accountable when they harm a patient, protect patients from paying out of pocket for emergency room services, provide an independent appeal process, and guarantee that treatment decisions are based on medical, and not financial, concerns. Those were included in the Texas law.

The President needs to stop trying to negotiate away from his own law, and support the same bill he said he supported in Texas, the Dingell-Ganske-Norwood Patients' Bill of Rights.

A BALANCED APPROACH TO ENERGY

(Mrs. WILSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, it costs \$1.60 cents a gallon when I filled up my tank on the corner of Alameda and 4th Street this weekend. Anybody in this country that pays a utility bill or put gas in the tank within the last month knows we have an energy crunch in this country. It is worse in the West, but it affects everybody.

I think everybody, most everybody, knows that Band-aids are not answers, and there are not any quick fixes that are going to solve the problems of energy in this country. We need a balanced, long-term approach, no Band-aids, no quick fixes, to give us stability in our energy markets.

I think it is too important to do anything but the right thing. That is going to require all of us to work together to do the right thing. We need to start with conservation. We made tremendous progress in this country with conservation in the last 20 years; and we are not going back, and nobody wants to. But we also have to increase the supplies of energy in this country, responsibly explore for energy in nonpark land, and give ourselves a mix of supply. It is only the balanced approach that will give us the energy that we need.

BAN DRILLING FOR OIL AND GAS UNDER GREAT LAKES

(Mr. STUPAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that today as we do the energy and water bill there will be an amendment by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE), and myself to ban the practice of drilling for gas and oil underneath the Great Lakes.